Rural-school control.—One of the neglected factors in American education has been the rural-school trustee. Very little has been written for his particular needs, and his contribution has been generally regarded as of little significance. President Showalter has been concerned with the interests of the 250,000 trustees of one-room rural schools, as well as with the many thousand additional school-board members who are controlling education in the small villages of our country, and has prepared a handbook[1] for their use.

The book does not project any great reform propaganda for rural education. It attempts to present to the conservative rural-school trustee the information which he needs for the progressive improvement of his school. The chapters discuss the general plan of school organization, the duties of school trustees, the management of finances, and the provision of a properly equipped school plant fitted to the needs of a rural community. They further discuss the selection of a teacher and as much of the details of school procedure as properly come within the control of the board of trustees. Chapters dealing with consolidation, health education, hot lunches, and an enriched curriculum are presented in such a manner that they serve to widen the point of view without appearing to deal with impossible or impractical extensions of rural education. The illustrations and diagrams are well chosen to stimulate the interest of the reader.

County superintendents and rural teachers would do well to bring this book to the attention of their school trustees. Granting that the district system is antiquated and that reorganization is badly needed, it is still worth while to attempt to secure the best possible service from rural trustees while operating under this system.

Elementary text in general science.—The natural interest which children have in scientific phenomena is often deadened rather than stimulated by their first course in school science. In order to capitalize this instinctive curiosity, C. W. Washburne has written a general science book[2] which is based upon the interests revealed by a collection of two thousand questions asked by children of junior high-school age.

The method of organizing the book is stated in the Preface:

> The questions collected were asked by several hundred children in the upper elementary grades, over a period of a year and a half. They were then sorted and classified according to the scientific principles needed in order to answer them. These principles constitute the skeleton of this course. The questions gave a very fair indication of the parts of science in which children are most interested. Physics, in simple, qualitative form—not mathematical physics, of course—comes first; astronomy

[1] N. D. SHOWALTER, *A Handbook for Rural School Officers*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920. Pp. xiii+213. $2.00.

[2] CARLETON W. WASHBURNE, *Common Science*. Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Co., 1920. Pp. xv+390. $1.60.

next; chemistry, geology, and certain forms of physical geography (weather, volcanoes, earthquakes, etc.) come third; biology, with physiology and hygiene, is a close fourth; and nature study, in the ordinary school sense of the term, comes in hardly at all [p. v].

The book is intended for an introductory course, and the aim throughout is the development of the science interests of the child, rather than the teaching of a logically organized body of scientific information. The method used is well adapted to this end. Each topic is introduced by a few of the questions which were included in the list gathered from the children. To illustrate, the topic of static electricity is opened with such questions as "What is electricity? What makes thunder and lightning? Why do sparks fly from the fur of a cat when you stroke it in the dark?" Following the questions is a simple paragraph, often in conversational style, to further arouse the interest of the child. The next step is the introduction of simple and interesting experiments which help to answer the introductory questions. These experiments do not require elaborate or expensive apparatus. The principle illustrated by the experiment is further clarified by discussion and the topic is closed with a series of inference exercises. Excellent illustrations and diagrams are freely used.

The book should be of value in conserving and developing the science interests of children of junior high-school age.

Recent revisions of texts in arithmetic, English, and history.—Superintendents and teachers will be interested in a number of well-known texts which now appear in revised form.

The arithmetic series by Hoyt and Peet[1] has been modified in the revision in two particular respects. The change in present prices and conditions has made it necessary to bring many of the examples up to date in this respect. A second change has been brought about by the recent development of scientific tests and drills. At frequent intervals, in the revised edition, there appear diagnostic tests for determining the specific weaknesses of pupils. Progress tests and scores are given at the end of each term's work to show how fully standards of advancement have been met.

In the field of English a set of texts has been revised by Hodge and Lee.[2] These books are based upon *Lessons in English* which was the successor of the "Reed and Kellogg" series. Book One, for grades four, five, and six, has been enlarged and contains some new material. Book Two, for grades seven and eight, has been re-written for the purpose of treating language work

[1] FRANKLIN S. HOYT and HARRIET E. PEET, *Everyday Arithmetic. Primary*, pp. viii+278, $0.72; *Intermediate*, pp. x+278, $0.76; *Advanced*, pp. x+326, $0.88. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1920 [revised].

[2] LAMONT F. HODGE and ARTHUR LEE, *Elementary English, Spoken and Written. Book One*, pp. 324; *Book Two*, pp. 464. New York: Charles E. Merrill Co., 1920 [revised].